

ELIMINATION GAMES FOR GAMING MACHINES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to game playing methods for gaming machines such as slot machines and video poker machines. More particularly, the present invention relates to methods of allowing game players to play elimination games on a gaming machine.

[0002] There are a wide variety of devices that can comprise a gaming machine such as a slot machine or video poker machine. Some examples of these devices are lights, slot reels, ticket printers, card readers, speakers, bill validators, coin acceptors, display panels, key pads, bonus wheels, and button pads. These devices provide many of the features which allow a gaming machine to present a game. Some of these devices are built into the gaming machine. Often, a number of devices are grouped together in a separate box that is placed on top of the gaming machine. Devices of this type are commonly called a top box.

[0003] Typically, utilizing a master gaming controller, the gaming machine controls various combinations of devices that allow a player to play a game of chance on the gaming machine and also encourage game play on the gaming machine. For example, a game played on a gaming machine usually requires a player to input money or indicia of credit into the gaming machine, indicate a wager amount, and initiate a game play. These steps require the gaming machine to operate input devices including bill validators and coin acceptors to accept money into the gaming machine and recognize user inputs from devices including key pads and button pads to determine the wager amount and initiate game play.

[0004] After a game of chance has been initiated on the gaming machine, the gaming machine determines a game outcome and presents the outcome of the game to a player. For example, for a slot game, after a player has initiated a game by pressing an input button or pulling a handle attached to the gaming machine, the gaming machine determines a game outcome which is the final position of each reel on the slot machine. A requirement for most gaming machines is that the probability of each game outcome is precisely known and remains constant during game play. Thus, when a player plays two or more games on a gaming machine the probability of a particular game outcome is the same for each game that the player initiates.

[0005] After the gaming machine determines the game outcome, the outcome of the game is presented to the player. For the slot game, the game outcome presentation might include a number reels spinning, visual effects including flashing or strobing lights and auditory effects including bells and whistles. The game outcome presentation, including the various visual and auditory effects, is designed to add excitement to the game being played on the gaming machine and encourage additional game play.

[0006] Usually near the end of the game outcome presentation, the game outcome is presented. For example, for the slot game, the reels stop at a final position. Based on the game outcome, the gaming machine may notify the player of an award of a varying amount or notify the player that the wager made on the game was lost. For example, for a slot game with three slot reels, when the final position of each

reel corresponds to the display of an identical symbol including three cherries, three bars or the like, a player might be awarded a credit of 5 times the initial wager made on the game. However, other symbol combinations including 2 cherries and a bar or two bars and a cherry might result in a loss of the wager made on the game. Further, each time a player plays a game the probability of a particular game outcome such as three cherries or three bars will usually be the same. After the game outcome has been presented, a player may initiate a new game by making a new wager on the gaming machine and initiating the next game play.

[0007] In addition to the game of chance on the gaming machine on the gaming machine, a player may also be presented a bonus game. The bonus game may be used to add additional excitement to the play of games on the gaming machine. In bonus games, which are particular popular with video slot games, the player is offered the chance to win an additional award amount. The bonus game may be triggered by different events that occur during the play of the game of chance. For instance, in a slot game, a particular symbol or combination of symbols appearing on the reels may trigger the bonus game.

[0008] The bonus game may incorporate additional animations that are displayed on one or more video displays on the gaming machine and the activation of one or more peripheral devices associated with the gaming machine. For example, Wheel-of-Fortune™ by IGT (Reno, Nev.) is a very popular bonus game that incorporates a large spinning wheel attached to the gaming machine. When the bonus game is triggered, the wheel spins up. The bonus may be awarded according to the stopping place of the wheel.

[0009] The amount of game play on a gaming machine is usually a function of the type of game of chance. A few examples of games that are played on video gaming machines are slot games, poker, black jack, and keno. Among these games, slot games and video poker are probably the most popular. The type of bonus games offered with the game of chance may also influence the popularity of a particular game. A casino typically offers various types of games and bonus games because many game players are attracted to some games but dislike others. When a player wants to play a game on a gaming machine but does not like any of the offered games, this person may choose not to play. Also, when a player finds a particular game only mildly exciting, the player may become disinterested after a short time and cease their game play. Thus, to increase game play, new games of chance and bonus games are desired that may attract players previously uninterested in game play on a gaming machine. Accordingly, to attract new players, new games for gaming machines are desired that are exciting and are interesting enough to hold a player's interest over a long period of time.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] This invention addresses the needs indicated above by providing an elimination game that may be played on a stand-alone gaming machine or that may be played on a group of gaming machines linked together. The elimination game is played by plurality of entities where each entity may comprise one or more virtual players or real players. The real players may pay a participation fee to play the elimination game. During the elimination game, the entities play one or